

# MOUNTAIN LAURELS

The UNG-Dahlongega Art & Literature Magazine



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# MOUNTAIN LAURELS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH GEORGIA-DAHLONEGA  
ART & LITERATURE MAGAZINE

Spring 2013  
Volume 18

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# Joker

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Brittany Fanning

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# Phases of Light

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There's something in the sunlight, the way it's fleeting and so young.  
First here, then there, then near. Unfair  
How she teases early spring.  
Peaking through the greyer months but skipping off before she's caught.  
Tricking budding blossoms, consistent she is not.

The lake serves as her dance floor, the world her pretty play thing.  
Hide and seek, run and peek.  
Through trees she skips on nimble feet.  
The rain becomes her canvas, resting raindrops twinkle in her gaze.  
Like yellow locks round her face, light shines as she plays.

Time goes by, and soon she changes. Now her light is steadier.  
Older now, and bolder now,  
Each day she lingers longer.  
She stares so timid in your face, reluctantly, leaves and sinks.  
She leaves a kiss to warm your cheek, face blushing shades of pinks.

All who know her love her and long to feel her presence.  
The birds sing praise of bright long days,  
And the flowers learn to trust her.  
They bask beneath her warming breath and lean to kiss her cheek.  
Her beauty near unbearable, her reflection cheers the creek.

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But time brings round more changes still, her eyes turn grey and cloudy.

The sun grows meek, she's dim and weak.

All nature seems to know.

The slender forms of forest trees leave their colors to decay.

They wrap themselves in mourner's wear to watch her slip away.

All is still and quiet, nature hasn't heart to stir.

The birds are gone. There is no song.

Just the whispering of the wind,

That tells the tragic story of a bitter end so cold.

But after death and mourning, a new beginning will unfold.

Cheyenne Franklin

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# The Zombies of Ground Zero

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Up from the dust they come covered in death.  
Through dust-filled rags they struggle for breath.  
Their clothes dirt and clay,  
Their cover decay,  
Like zombies they flee a blackened morn,  
Civilians, survivors, victims of scorn.

Up through the smoke climb ominous faces.  
Through dust and decay, they rise as death chases.  
Above fear, reservation,  
Above self-preservation,  
Enforcers and heroes climb smoky staircases,  
And hardhats hide their ashen faces.

Up from debris they rise lifeless and dead.  
They wander a world consumed with dread.  
Together in terror,  
They hope and despair.  
They roam the streets and suffer the cost,  
Families left searching for loved ones lost.



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Up from the nations they come far and wide.  
Fighting for freedom on the world's other side.  
Sweet hearts their lovers, lovers their lives,  
The sleep that's robbed from the man who survives;  
These are the payments for freedom to all,  
And these are the soldiers who answered the call.

But once more they'll rise, when glory prevails;  
The lifeless made holy by hands scarred by nails.  
Their souls He'll strengthen, their bodies mend.  
Rising together, they'll finally ascend,  
Soldiers, loved ones, many a hero,  
And the victims set free from the graves of ground zero.

Cheyenne Franklin

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# The Herons

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Brianna Funderburk

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## Poema al Búho (The Owl's Poem)

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Bajo las estrellas que se entregan al frío desciende  
Beneath the stars that devote themselves to the cold, he descends  
El olor entre la nieve percibido por el remoto búho  
The scent having been picked up by the distant owl among the snow  
Con extenuante cara figura de la apasionada forma  
With resolute face stenciled in a passionate shape  
Que hace de un corazón la intrigada llama del amor  
That melts hearts into the beckoning flame of love  
Cuyos ululares potentes adornan la parada nupcial  
Whose masterful hooting embroiders the mating display  
La magnificencia del tamaño de sus ojos  
The magnificent size of his eyes  
Que dan consejos a luna cómplice y enmudecida  
Which counsel the silent and accompanying moon  
Direccionando al duque de la oscuridad  
Guiding the duke of darkness  
Su fascinante silencio, audacia, inteligencia y fuerza  
His fascinating silence, audacity, intelligence and strength  
El pardo leonado que con reflejo de luz parece dorado  
Along with the brownish-grey that when reflected in light seem golden

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Deslumbran aquel peculiar plumaje  
All dazzle that peculiar plumage  
Entre los rebaños y entre los valles cruzados  
Among the flocks and between the criss-crossing valleys  
En dirección al altar bajo la luz del búho.  
That lead the way to the altar under the light of the owl.

By: Mónica Montero Cortés  
Translated By: J. Fenton Gardner



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# Lyall

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Mary Ledford

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# Distant Hearts

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Distant Hearts beat in circadian rhythm,  
A well known chorus but a lost melody.  
Crying out searching in the silent darkness,  
For the harmony that once was.  
A song so promising,  
Yet, the duration so short.  
One heart lost amidst society's noise,  
While the other beats in time to her own ambitions.  
Distant hearts sing solo,  
Unknowingly falling into referubished consonance.

Sarah Ellen Marshall

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# Reflection

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Every day in the mirror, there is a girl, perfect in beauty. White skin that appears powdered, but isn't. Long russet hair, parted in the middle. Smooth on top, falling in curls down to her waist. When you first look upon her, her eyes grow, and she presses her hand against the glass, leaning closer, trying to speak to you.

But she is voiceless.

She pulls her hand away, unwillingly. The print of her hand remains as she closes her eyes and tries not to cry, and you hurry away.

You return at the same time of the next day. You walk up to the glass and see her still looking down, hair falling to frame her face, hands clasped together before her. You tap on the glass and she looks up, joy flooding her face. You see teardrops lace her eyelashes, impossibly dark. She smiles at you, soundlessly speaking, and you can't help but nod, believing that you can hear her. Your attention makes her happy, and her smile become more genuine. You hear a clock ringing in the background, and you tell her you must go. Her face falls.

"But I'll come back tomorrow."

And you do.

You return every day at the same time, and you speak to the beautiful girl with no words. Every day, you must leave, and she flattens her hand against the glass, reaching out to you.

The Seventh day, you are late, and you enter the room running. She has her head in her hands, and you know she is crying. You lay your hand on the glass, the first time you have ever done so, and she looks up.

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Her eyes are filled with awe as she looks at you. She moves her hand, slowly, ever so slowly, and places it on yours; the only thing separating you is a thin sheet of glass.

And then it is not. Her hands entwine with yours, and she pulls you towards her. You step through the mirror, eager to hold her in your arms.

Her hand is colder than you expected, and though she has begged you to hold her, she makes no movement towards you.

You tear your eyes from hers and take in your surroundings. There is nothing from your world's reflection, only glass. A small, octagonal floor, with a smaller octagonal platform in the middle. Each wall was glass, running from the floor to the matching ceiling.

Your eyes fall back to hers, but before you can do anything, she smiles and opens her mouth to speak. Her eyes light up, her hair begins to blow back, and the screaming starts.

Your eardrums burst and you collapse as she flies towards you, devouring you until you are nothing.

She rises and wipes her bloodied mouth on her sleeve. She backs up and steps on the pedestal. Hands clasped together before her, she stares at the mirror, and waits.

Jillian Murphy



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# A Season of Strength

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The wind cold against my face  
Burning my nose and cheeks  
I appreciate its ability to reach me without being seen  
A single brown leaf rustling nearby  
I hear its every move  
I appreciate its ability to hang on  
When all of the others have fallen  
Fallen to the ground without hesitation  
Giving in to the norms of the season  
Never wavering from what was expected of them  
Never stepping outside of the box like the one that clung to the limb  
With desperation she wanted to be heard  
She wanted to be seen  
Seen as the one that beat the odds  
She didn't fall as predicted with the season  
She clung strong, never wavering  
Most thought she would become weak  
Would succumb to the diagnosis of winter  
She remained focused on enduring  
Enduring the season  
The season that should have already consumed her

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Ripped her from her purpose  
Her purpose had changed  
Changed to something more  
More meaning  
More depth  
If only she could hang on  
Hang on through this season

Brandy Nikki Pass

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## A Storm Named Sandy

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They sit, cross-legged, on the hardwood floor, while the storm beats their house into submission, rounding off the corners and smoothing the whole.

“If we just had power,” she says, half-heartedly banging the back of her head into the chair she leans against, “It wasn’t so boring before the power went out.”

The man, fair-haired and thin, runs his hand back and forth over a candle flame to make it flicker.

“Well, it’s out now,” he says, a bit abruptly, “Nothing we can do about it.”

“You could play piano for me.”

“I don’t feel like it.”

“You never feel like it.”

The man says nothing to this. He stands and begins inspecting the two boarded-up windows.

She watches him for a moment while the wind-whipped house emanates a low hum. Every few seconds the air catches on a corner of the house and makes a different noise.

“We used to do things,” she says, quietly.

“What do you mean?”

“We used to do fun stuff, swimming and movies and concerts and sex.

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Now we sit around and watch TV.”

“Do you want to have sex?”

“No.”

They listen to the wind for a few minutes.

He leans against the wall and she leans her head back on the chair and rubs her temples with her fingers.

“I don’t even know you,” she says at last, and a gust of wind punctuates this so loudly that he waits a moment to reply.

“Well, maybe you shouldn’t have married me then,” he says casually.

“Maybe not.” She looks away.

He waits for her to speak again.

“Hurricanes are more exciting on TV.”

“Yep. People just evacuate so they won’t get bored.”

“How much longer is it going to rain?”

“Five or six hours at least.”

“God.”

She thumps her head into the chair again. The sky thunders loudly and



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the rain picks up, blowing in long sheets against the side of the house.

He sighs.

“You were the one who wanted to stay.”

“I know.”

He walks over and sits beside her, his leather work boots crossed, her white and blue running shoes ending at his shins.

He reaches into the seat of the chair for a book and begins to read.

She watches him for a couple minutes and then she inches closer and puts her cheek on his shoulder.

“I love the way you look when you read,” she says softly.

He turns his head and looks down at her over his glasses.

“You really *must* be bored.”

“You have no idea,” she says and abruptly stands and begins to walk around the room, subconsciously inspecting the windows before turning and saying, as if the thought just struck her, “Who names a storm ‘Sandy’?”

He says nothing, but flips the switch on the plastic radio beside him and continues to read.

Music joins the wind and rain and she listens absently, facing the brown-grey of a wall, and the hills and the valleys of the grain grow and she

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remembers the familiar song.

*Wise men say, only fools rush in.....*

She turns and he has put the book down on the floor and is looking at her sadly. She puts her back against the wall and slides down, her knees to her chest and her hands wrapped around her shins.

*Shall I stay? Would it be a sin.....*

They sit across the room from each other and he is quiet and she begins to cry.

“What happened to us?”

He wants to say that nothing is wrong. He looks at her, crumpled in the corner, and can’t bring himself to lie.

“I don’t know. I’m sorry.”

*Take my hand, take my whole life too. For I can’t help, falling in.....*

He looks at the radio and wonders why it had to be that song. He turns it off and the room is quiet.

He stands, crosses to the front door, snaps it open and is instantly soaked as the rain blows sideways into the house. He faces it and walks down the porch steps into the dark-green world, struggling to keep his balance from gusts that bend the palm trees and he takes two or three steps forward and sees the ocean raging, whitecaps blowing off the tops of the waves.

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He inhales deeply the salty, electric smell of the storm before turning back and seeing the door of the house still open and his wife in the doorway, blonde hair soaked, yelling at him to get back in the house, her voice small against the wind.

He turns back to the ocean for a moment before walking back to the bottom of the porch steps. He looks up at her, crying and wet in the doorway, and feels nothing, except a bit of guilt from the not-feeling.

“Please come back in the house,” she says, softly.

He walks up the steps and she closes the door behind him and the room is very dark and quiet.

She puts her head on his chest and he holds her. What else can he do?

Outside, the sand whips off the beach and the rain keeps falling, the last few hours of a storm named Sandy.

Daniel Staub

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Frank

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Daniele Talend

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# Seaworthy

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He played Mozart on the ridges of her ribcage,  
her ivory frame the perfect keys for his strong, skilled fingers  
to honor ancient concertos  
and compose original melodies of discovery, love, and adventure,  
for their hearts and minds were powered and united by these elements.

He was her captain and she was his siren,  
together sailing forth on the savage seas to explore ancient lands,  
never gouged by boot or keel  
and never sighted by a weary, land-starved eye.

His jagged smile, lopsided from years of overuse,  
reflected strength and courage  
surging from a warrior's heart.

Her burnished eyes, clear as the Caribbean  
shone with the sweet wanderlust  
of a dreamer in love.

His arms were strong as cedars,  
her bulkhead during sudden squalls.

Her mermaid kisses were soft, intoxicating,  
his comfort through long watches of the night.

Together they were a seafaring masterpiece,  
lashed together by salty winds,  
visions of myths, and golden vows.

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Legend says love rose from their ocean skin  
like summer mists  
tossed upon the crests of gentle wave,  
when the waters are at peace  
and all is right beneath the moon.  
They remain the envy of all who encounter them  
on their way into the ever-widening horizon,  
into the setting sun.

Joanna Toso



